



An Analysis of Population Change in Spokane County, Washington and Kootenai County, Idaho

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I. Executive Summary

Spokane County, Washington and Kootenai County, Idaho encompass the largest single population center between Seattle and Minneapolis across the northern tier of the United States. As of the 2000 census, 526,624 people live in this two-county region. Since 1980, the population has increased 31%, with over 75% of that growth occurring in the 1990s. Regional decision-making and planning are dependent upon understanding these rates of growth, the changes in the general characteristics of the population and what can be anticipated as future growth. This report describes these factors. The following is a summary of the important findings from the report.

- Spokane County is the more populous county representing 80% of the region's population, but Kootenai County's population grew over 55% in the 1990s.
- Although both counties experienced significant growth during the 1990s, the rate of growth during the first half of the decade was greater than the last half and these rates appear to be lower during the early years of the decade beginning in 2000.
- The percentage of people over 35 in the two counties has increased since 1980.
- The largest increases in population have been in workforce age people and elderly.

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- Migration accounts for the largest increases in population rather than natural increase.
 - Depending on the decade, migration represents from 71% to 90% of Kootenai County's population growth over the past three decades.
 - Migrants to Kootenai County are primarily from western states, whereas those to Spokane County represent a larger spectrum of locations across the United States.
 - According to one study, a large portion of the migrants to Spokane County in 2001 and 2002 are international.
 - 59% of all the housing stock built in the region between 1980 and 2000 occurred in Kootenai County
 - Over the past three decades, much of the housing has been built in former rural areas that are now becoming urbanized.
 - The range in forecasted population for 2010 for Spokane County is 477,909 to 486,303, or a gain of 60,000 to 70,000 from 2000.
 - The range in forecasted population for 2010 for Kootenai County is 142,575 to 152,495, or a gain of 34,000 to 44,000 from 2000.
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